

Analogies in Iranian and Armenian Folklore

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The Armenians, whose language P. DE LAGARDE¹ and Friedrich MÜLLER² declare IRANIAN, and H. HÜBSCHMANN³ characterizes as a self-dependent member of the Indo-Arian linguistic family, were in consequence of the geographical position of their country, which was on the main road between the east and the west from ancient times, in contact with nations of different races and civilisation. One may even say, that the civilisation and the political development of the country were always under foreign influence. Babylonian and Assyrian influences are proved from the 9th century B. C. downwards, for the kings of Wan left cuneiform inscriptions as monuments of their proud victories. But the reigns of the Achæmenian kings and their successors, the Arsacides and Sassanides (from the 5th century B. C. to the 7th century A. D.), influenced most deeply the life, religion, political organisation and jurisdiction of the Armenians and especially their language. The Armenian scholar Bagrat CHALATIANZ⁴ endeavoured recently, by tracing Iranian heroic legends in the Armenian folklore, to prove that the Iranian influences extended a great deal farther. These Armenian legends, known by the name of the legends of RUSTAM-I-ZAL, relate not only the deeds of the Iranian hero Rustam, but also those of the other Persian Pehlviâns, with whom the Armenian hero has many traits in common. Several

¹ Cf. P. DE LAGARDE, *Armenische Studien*. I. Teil. Göttingen, 1877.

² Fr. MÜLLER, *Grundriss der Sprachwissenschaft*, I Bd. I. Teil. Wien, 1876. S. 97.

³ H. HÜBSCHMANN, *Armenische Studien*. Leipzig, 1893.

⁴ B. CHALATIANZ, *Iranische Helden im armenischen Volke*. Russian Review "Ethnographische Uebersicht," hrg. von der Kaiserl. Ethnogr. Gesellschaft, Moskau 1900, XII Vol., 45. The same: "Die armenische Heldensage" *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Volkskunde* XII, 1902. "Die iranische Heldensage bei den Armeniern," *ibidem* XIV, 1904.

episodes from the life of Rustam are bodily taken over into the Armenian epos. The popularity of the Iranian heroic legends among the Armenians is an important fact, and its consequence was, that the Armenian national hero, though impregnated with the character of the Iranian heroes, remained nevertheless the favourite of his own people.¹ This is all very easy to understand. In the remotely situated country of Armenia with its quiet, patriarchal life, the remembrance of the old heroic times could certainly more easily be preserved than in other countries that were sooner carried on by the current of modern civilisation. But not only are the Iranian heroic legends, which were formerly recited by professional minstrels (Gusans), remembered among the people of Armenia and among simple peasants, even nowadays, but the influences of the Iranian religion may likewise still be traced in the popular Armenian belief, as Dr. Manuk ABEGHIAN² points out in his treatise. Following this young Armenian scholar, I will try to point out several analogies in Armenian and Iranian folklore.

The principal point in the Armenian popular belief is, as among the Iranians, the belief about the opposition between light and darkness, or between the spirits of light, whose names are mostly Christian, and the bad spirits, the black *devs*, roving about, invisible or sometimes visible, in various shapes in the air, the water, the earth and human dwelling places. There is a struggle between the spirits of light, who are friendly to man and protect him, and the dark demons, who are his enemies and do him injury. Every blessing, such as life, daylight, joy and happiness is considered to be effectuated by the spirits of light; and every bad thing, such as death, darkness, sickness, and misfortune is caused by the evil spirits of the night. Therefore the black, smoky *devs* are feared, but not worshipped. Light, which is the supreme God, only is worshipped. The one, good God, who rules the world and has given unto man his luminous belief and his law of righteousness, is also conceived under the idea of light. He has under his command and in his service hosts of angels and saints. It is even so with the idea of God

¹ Moses of Khorene (5th century) remarks to the young prince Saak BAGRATUNI: If you like I will relate to you about the hero TORX, incredible and absurd things as the Persians do relate about ROSTOM SAGTSCHICK, asserting that he possessed the strength of 120 elephants. Cf. MOSES CHORENAZI, *Geschichte Armeniens*, Venedig, 1881, S. 174—Langlois Collection II, 84.

² "Der armenische Volksglaube." Leipzig, 1899. 127 S.

in the religion of Zarathustra. "Ahura Mazda is the one God, the Creator, the Ruler and Preserver of the Universe, without form, and invisible. To Him is assigned a place above all, and to Him every praise is to be given for all the good and for all the blessings we enjoy in this world. He is the source of immense light from which all glory, bounty and goodness flow. He is represented as the mightiest, the most just, and the most benevolent. His mercies are as boundless as His being."¹ Upon a golden throne, under golden beams, and a golden canopy sits Ahura Mazda together with the six Amesha-Spentas, the Archangels (cf. Yt. XV, 2; XVII, 9), after whom range the Yazatas or angels as the third in the rank.

Heaven, paradise and hell are conceived by the Armenians in the same way as by the Iranians. Heaven is represented as a town, sometimes called the "inestimable town." The Iranian exterior heaven, which the later Parsi writings distinguish from an interior one, where the stars are fixed and which is always in motion, is *Asman*, a word that in the Armenian dialect of Arçax occurs for *heaven*, a protecting wall of blue stones for keeping off the evil spirits (cf. W. GEIGER, *Ostiranische Kuttur*, pp. 304-5). According to this conception, the celestial town of the Armenians is surrounded by high-heaped masses of stones, provided with brazen gates. Thorns are fastened at the gates to drive away "the evil eye" and all evil spirits and to prevent their entrance. The celestial town has the aspect of a luminous temple or a radiant palace. It is a place and home of immortality. All is light and brightness and glory. There is no darkness and no cold. Around this celestial building spreads afar the paradise of immortality or paradise of light. There are various trees and plants blooming eternally and spreading perfumes of immortality. Under these trees flows the "milk-fountain," likewise called "fountain of immortality." In this paradise of light, dwell the angels and the blessed who have themselves become angels. They wear on their heads imperishable wreaths of light and are seated on radiant chairs around a golden table full of delicious, or according to Old-Armenian conception,

¹ Cf. D. F. KARAKA, *History of the Parsis*, II, p. 185, quotation from HAUG's essays.

imperishable dishes and fruit.¹ The blessed taste the fruit and drink the water from the milk-fountain of immortality. The angels and the blessed are incessantly singing hymns of praise to God, who is seated in the temple of light on a golden throne amidst the radiant light.

It is in heaven, which is the dwelling-place of God and the heavenly beings, as the earth is the dwelling-place of men, that we have to imagine according to the Avesta the site of the paradises, the highest of which is Garônmâna, the radiant abode, where the pious deceased go to, the house of praises, as the name may be translated. Here everything is light, brightness and glory. Here Ahura Mazda sits enthroned together with all the gods, praised by the hymns of the blessed. In the same way Iahwe, who like Ahura Mazda is the Supreme Being, the Lord of the whole universe, in whose hands are all the creatures, is, as we see in the books of the Old Testament, in his holy palace in heaven on his throne, surrounded by the princes of the angels, i.e., archangels, שרים. (Cf. Ps. XI, 4; XVIII, 7. Daniel X, 13.) Michael is called אחד השרים הראשונים, one of the first archangels, because in the Old Testament also there are different ranks of angels. In Tobit XII, 15, is written: ואני הוא רפאל המלאך אחד מן השרים המשרתים לפניכם הנכבד I am Raphael, one of the seven angels, who are ministering before the face of the Lord of the Divine Majesty. In the palace of Iahwe everyone exclaims: Glory! (Ps. XXIX, 9.) In Targ. Genes. 32, 36, are mentioned even the special hours of the day when the מלאכיים משבחייה offer up their praises to God.

1 The Old-Armenian word *anusak* has the same signification as Zd. *anusa*, Pahl. *anusa* immortal, imperishable, but in Neo-Armenian *anusak*, *anotis*, means only *fragrant*, *savoury*, as the compounds *anusakoir*, *anusakurak*. In other passages, where *anusak*, according to *ÖXOAX* (Dizionario armeno-italiano, Venezia, 1837), means *gustoso dolce*, etc., it belongs to *anotis*; cf. HÜBSCHMANN, *Armenische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1897, pp. 99-100; ABEGHIAN, p. 37, note 1. Therefore, *anusak kerakur* means *imperishable food* = *savoury food*, *delicious food*. In the *Arda Viraf Nameh* (ed. Dastur Kaikhosru Jamaspji JAMASP ASA, Bombay, 1902) we find (X, 3) *anush*, the beverage producing immortality, and with FIRDUSI, ed. Vullers, I, 257, 233 :

انوشہ بڑی تو کہ امروز جنگ ∴ بتنگ اندر آوردن پور پشنگ

Opposed to paradise is HELL, the dreadful place of eternal darkness, in Armenian *dzoxk*, Np. *دڅوځ*, *dōzax*, Paz. *dōzax*, Phl. *𐭠𐭣𐭥*, *dōšaxv*, in the inscriptions of the Sassanides *dōšaxvi*, Av. *𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌* (Yt. XIX, 44) Geldner:

𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌

𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌

"I shall make the Evil Spirit rush up from dreary hell." Cf. HÜBSCHMANN, a. o. p. 142; Vend. XIX, 47: *𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬎𐬌*, the Daêvas ran away into the depths of the dark, horrid world of hell; Yt. IV., 7: *𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌*. Cf. BARTHOLOMAE, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, Strassburg 1905, s. v. *daozaiva*; Grundriss d. iran. Phil. I, 156, 30a. For the Armenians, Hell is an abyss beneath the earth, divided into seven degrees and it holds, like a strong prison, the bad black spirits and the guilty evil-smelling souls that are given up to the hands of innumerable devils immediately after their death. Everywhere the fire is burning in the stoves and spreads a dense and almost palpable smoke which increases the torments of darkness. Nevertheless one sees in the dim light, how the poor souls, who have iron shoes in their feet and their mouth full of vermin, are tormented. Here, one devil strikes them with a leaden whip; there, another one renders iron staffs red hot and burns therewith their sides; then a third one tears their flesh with tongs. Other souls are seated up to the neck into cauldrons filled to the brim with boiling tar. The seven-headed fiery dragon opens his immense mouth to swallow the soul. He breathes fire and burns the souls who fly from him terrified. But the only way out that they can find is the bridge MAZÊ over the fire-stream between paradise and hell. But scarcely have they set foot upon it when it breaks under the weight of their sins and they fall into the fire-stream. Then they are again tormented until God has mercy upon them and enlightens them.

Opposed to GARÔNMÂNA,¹ the place of eternal light, the handsome dwelling-place, the dwelling-place of good thoughts, the best world or heaven, where Ahura Mazda dwells in eternal joy (cf. Yt. 22, 15; Yaçna 45, 8; 30, 14; 32, 15; 46, 16),

¹ Cf. A. V. W. JACKSON, Die iranische Religion, Grundriss der iranischen Philologie, Vol. II., p. 685.

is the HELL in the Avesta, the house of lie, the dwelling of the worst thoughts, the worst life (*cf.* Ys. 51, 14; 32, 13; Vd. 3, 35). As in the paradise of the Armenians, the pious get savoury food and delicious fruit, so in the hell of the Avesta the sinners have bad food and have to endure mockery (*cf.* Ys. 51, 20; 49, 11). The description given in the ARDÂ-I-VIRÂF of hell and of the punishments awarded therein to the wicked bears, as Dr. Haug says, "a striking resemblance to the accounts to be found in DANTE'S INFERNO. In some points it resembles the vision of the prophet ISAIAH in the Old Testament." (*Cf.* D. FR. KABAHA, *Hist. of the Parsis*, Vol. II., p. 196. G. MADDOX, *The Ardâi Virâf Nâmeḥ, or the Revelations of Ardâi Virâf*, etc. Madras, 1904.)

It cannot be denied that Christianity and Islam have influenced the Armenian ideas of heaven and hell, but undoubtedly several particulars are older, for, together with the ancient words borrowed from other languages: *asman* (at least in one Armenian dialect), *anusāk*, *džoxk*, *t'onir*,¹ the Iranian belief in heaven, hell and paradise were likewise taken up by the Armenians. According to ABEGHIAN, p. 5, every far-spread belief in Armenia ought to be considered as Armenian popular belief, even if it is of foreign origin. The language may serve as a means of distinguishing the foreign elements from the Armenian or the Armenianised. While, for instance, the Old Iranian words borrowed in the Armenian language are long since Armenianised, many current words of Arabic, Neo-Persian and especially of Turkish origin, are considered, if not always by the common people, at least by the upper classes, as foreign words. So *e.g.*, the word *t'onir*, which is borrowed from the Iranians and used already in the fifth century, is held to be Armenian, while the word *ojax*,² the hearth, taken from the Tartaric tribes, is usually not considered as Armenian. For this reason only the old *t'onir* is considered as holy everywhere

¹ This word of Semitic origin means "baker's oven, stove, a portable stove." It is the same word as the Avestic 𐬀𐬎𐬭𐬀, Vendid. 8, 91, Phl. 𐬀𐬎𐬭𐬀, Np. تنورة or تنور, Hebr. Aram ܬܢܘܪ Arab. تنور *Cf.* SPIEGEL, *Kommentar z. Avesta I*, p. 265, and HUEBSCHMANN, *Arm. Gramm.* p. 155; *Glossary and Index of the Pahlavi texts* by E. W. WEST, Bombay-London, 1874.

² *Cf.* *Dictionnaire Turco-Français* par I. D. KIEFFER et T. X. BIANCHI, p. 121: اودجاق, *odjâg*, 1, cheminée, foyer; (2) caste, maison, famille.

in Armenia. It is erected in the midst of the house and built into the floor. It equals the church in holiness. The spirits of the house, the Manes, probably dwell near it and have their sacrifices on occasion of the family feasts, *e. g.*, a wedding.

Like the Avesta doctrines, which are known from Yt. 22 and the Minokhired, and which are, to a certain extent, seen among the Muhammedans,¹ the Armenians believe that the soul of a deceased lingers for three days in the neighbourhood of the body.² On the fourth day at dawn it sets out on its way to the place of judgment, accompanied by two angels, a good and a bad one. Sometimes both are considered as protecting angels, of whom the one protects the soul and the other the body (ABEGHIAN, p. 16, 18). The march to the place of judgment lasts seven days. The bad angel with the help of other bad spirits assails the pious soul and tries to make it his own, but the good angel repels him with his fiery sword and protects the soul. So the soul proceeds to the fatal bridge of judgment, called *Mazê* in Armenian, *čínvato peretu* in the Avesta.³ As with the Iranians, the judgment is held before the gates of heaven that are in the East. It is described in the same manner as in the Avesta and the co-lateral literature. The good and bad deeds of man are weighed in the balance of justice, which, according to the Iranians, is in the hands of *Rashnu razishta*, the just. The final sentence depends upon the rising or sinking of the impartially weighed scales.⁴ The bad angels bring forward their charges against the soul, while the good ones, especially VIRGIN MARY, defend it, just as, in the Avesta, *Mithra* and *Sraosha* plead in

¹ See JUSTI, *Geschichte des alten Persiens*, Berlin 1879, p. 90.

² Cf. Yt. 22, 1-6, 19-24; 24, 53-54. Vd. 19, 28. Ardâi-Viraf 4, 8-14; 17, 2-9. Minokh. 2, 114, 158-161. Dd. 24, 1-4; 25, 1-4. SPIEGEL, *Erân-Altertumsk* II. 149 ff. GEIGER, OK, p. 263, 276 ff. J. DARMESTETER, *Le Zend-Avesta*, Traduction nouvelle, etc., Paris 1892. JACKSON, *Grundriss d. ir. Ph.* II, 634, 635.

³ See Yasna 51, 13; 46, 10-11; 71, 16. Vd. 19, 30. Dâdistân-i Dinik 24, 5. D. F. KARAKA, *History of the Parsis*, II, pp. 192-193.

⁴ JACKSON: Weighing the soul in the balance after death, an Indian as well as Iranian idea, *Actes du Xme. Congr. des Orient.* II, 65, 74. How these ideas are traceable in Christianity is shown by several middle-age representations of the final judgment, where the Archangel MICHAEL is seen in the midst of the scene with the balance of justice in his hands. The remorse of the soul on this last way is described as most dreadful. Ardâi Viraf 5, 6. Mkh. 2, 19, 122. Dd. 8, 1.

favour of the soul, while the bad spirits accuse it. The souls of the just, whose good actions weigh heavier, enter paradise after having passed the bridge *Mazê* without hazard, and the guilty go to hell because the bridge is too narrow for them or cannot endure the weight of their sins. It breaks and the soul falls into the fire-stream that flows beneath the bridge between paradise and hell. But those who are neither guilty nor innocent, whose good and evil actions counterbalance each other, remain behind the paradise, between paradise and hell. "In right logical consequence," says JACKSON,¹ "Zoroastrism supposes a third place for those cases where the good and bad actions of a life are of precisely the same weight." This place is known in Pahlavi by the name of "*Hamēstakān*," the ever-stationary or equilibrium.² Already in the *Gāthās* this intermediate place is alluded to; the idea, therefore, is not new. This third state, a sort of purgatory, is imagined as an intermediate place between earth and the starry region. Here the soul has no worse troubles than the change between heat and cold produced by the different seasons, and here it must await the general resurrection and the final judgment.³ In the *Avesta*, MITHRA, the god of the morning-sun, is the principal judge of the souls that are weighed before the bridge and is assisted by SRAOSHA and RASHNU; with the Armenians it is CHRIST who is seated on the rising sun.

Closely and most naturally connected with the belief into the immortality of the soul is the worship of the souls of the deceased. With all Indo-German tribes the cult of the MANES was naturally a family-and-tribe

¹ Cf. JACKSON, *Grundr. d. ir. Phil.* II, 685. Besides see "Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte, in Verbindung mit Fachgelehrten herausgegeben unter Redaktion von P. D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE, Tübingen, 1905, where II, 218-226, the Iranian ideas about death, the other world, and the last things are treated.

² Dastur Kaikhoerū Jamaspji JAMASP ASA in his edition of the *Ardāi-Virāf*, VI, 3 s.v. *𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀* quotes E. WEST "The ever-stationary—the intermediate place for those not good enough for heaven, and not bad enough for hell where such souls remain in a passive immovable state till the resurrection." See CASARTELLI, tr. *Dastur Piroz Masda-Yasnia Religion*, pp. 194-196. ROTH, *Z. D. M. G.* XXXVII, 5, 223. Bartholomae, A. F., III, 61 seq. De HARLEZ, *Z. D. M. G.* XXXVI, 627-631. BB. IX, 294-299. IF. III, 169-170. MILLS, S. B. E. XXXI, note 3. MODI, *Parsee System*, in *World's Parliament of Religions*, II, 905-906. J. DARMESTER, *Le Z. A.* III, 47, translates *Ardāi-Virāf* VI, 8-12, (V. Dink. VIII, 14, 8); II, 650, note 16.

³ Cf. *Ardāi-Virāf* 6, 1-12. Mkh. 7, 18-19; 12, 14. According to Dd. 24, 6 and 33, 2, *Hamēstakān* is divided into two parts: one for the somewhat good, the other for the somewhat bad one. See JACKSON, *ibid.* p. 685, note.

worship.¹ Five times during the year, the day after the five great festivals is consecrated to the memory of the deceased. (The Romans used to sacrifice to the *Manes* on the occasion of the so-called "*Feralia*"; the Indians offer up sacrifices, prayers and worship to their *Pitris*, and the Parsis to the *Fravashis*). Already on Saturday, the eve of the feast, the souls, according to Armenian belief, descend from heaven to earth and abide in the neighbourhood of the tombs or in the habitations of their relations. Their memory ought to be worshipped on this evening with incense and candles. The perfume of the incense is agreeable to the souls, because the *incense-tree* grows also in paradise. The souls are also universally worshipped in Armenia on the eve of other festivals and on every Saturday. Usually incense is burnt at home on the hearth with prayers for them, or one lays fire on a plate, puts the incense upon it and carries it about in the house, in all corners, in the stable and everywhere where the souls are believed to be. The *Manes* are worshipped in the most solemn way in the cemetery on *All Souls' Day*, as they like best to stay near their graves. The souls of the beloved dead see the survivors and rejoice to see that they are remembered. To make them delighted, wood and incense are brought and burnt at the head of every tomb.

The *Manes* stay on the earth for three days. On the third day they return to heaven blessing their descendants. But the souls of those who were not remembered by their relations curse them and go sadly away. Also on other days the souls come to visit their relations and render them various service. Especially the souls of fathers assist their sons. They receive therefore peculiar worship, their graves are held holy and one swears on their souls or their graves. "Upon the soul of my father" (literally: the soul of my father be witness), "upon the grave of my father or grandfather," are the usual ways of swearing. The souls of the parents are even invoked to help in distress and they do so. For all this we can trace analogies with the Parsis. "It should be stated," says KARAKA I, 212-13, "that the Parsis do not forget their deceased relations who have quitted this sublunary world for another. Ceremonies are performed by the well-to-do on every day during the first year and on every

¹ See GEIGER OK, p. 287.

anniversary of the melancholy event. The last ten days of the Parsi year are specially dedicated to the memory of the dead, and the ceremonies then performed are known as the *Fravardīgān*,¹ or *Muktad*,² as they are popularly called.

“ According to the 13th section of the Fravardin Yasht, the souls of the departed desire to be remembered during these days by those whom they lived with and left behind in this world. They are said to express their desire in the following words :

• ၁၈၄၁-၁၈၄၂ ခုနှစ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ်
 နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ်
 ၁၈၄၁-၁၈၄၂ ခုနှစ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ် နှစ်စဉ်

“Who will praise us? Who will offer to us? Who will consider us his own? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with hands bearing food and bearing clothes? And who will pray for us?”

“ This passage explains, to a great extent, the ceremonies of the Fravardigân during the ten days when one of the rooms of the house is thoroughly cleaned, whitewashed, and set apart. In it, every morning the choicest flowers and best fruit of the season are placed in trays upon stands, and prayers are offered during the day. The room thus specially sanctified is made as fragrant and appropriate for the purpose as possible, in order that the memory of the dead may be revered, and that the living may be able to pray for their dead relatives in an earnest, quiet, and composed frame of mind.

“Fruit and flowers are essential in most of the Parsi ceremonies for either the dead or the living. The practice of performing ceremonies and saying prayers for the dead is much insisted upon among the Parsis. It is also affirmed in Pehlevi books that the souls of the dead are extremely gratified and pleased in heaven at seeing that the dear ones on this earth have not forgotten them, and that their memory is preserved in the minds of their relations.”

¹ See SPIEGEL, E. A. II, 91-97. GEIGER OK, 286-94. J. DARMESTETER, Le Z. A. II, 154, 503 and note 11; 518-519. E. W. WEST, Grundr. d. iran. Phil. II, 104, § 47. JACKSON, *ibidem* II, 643.

* See SHAPURJI EDALJI गुजराती-इस्लामी कोष, London 1868, sec. edit. s. v. मुक्ति (not fr. मक्ति, because the popular notion is that the spirits of the dead are released for some time every year). An anniversary ceremony among the Parsis in commemoration of the dead. Cf. the Sanscrit words मुक्ति, liberation, releasement from worldly bonds, beatitude; मुक्त, मुक्तात्मन् liberated, released, Pers. مُخْلَا. The Gujer. મુક્તી, Sk. मुक्ति, means final beatitude, the delivery of the soul from the body and exemption from further transmigration. See the Gujrati-English Dictionary by Mirza Mahomed CAUZIM—Nowrojee FURDOONJEE.

The sun as the orb of the day, giving light and warmth, the moon as the light of the night, regulating the time by its increasing or waning, have from the most ancient times been the object of worship. Both are often invoked in the Avesta, the sun as the resplendent, as one of the rapid steeds, and as the eye of Ahura Mazda, and the moon as *𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬭𐬀*, which contains the seed of the kine. (Ys. I, 11; DARMEST. Le Z. A. II, 285, note 28.) The Khôrshêd Yasht and Khôrshêd Nyâyish are dedicated to the sun, and the Mâh Yasht and the Mâh Nyâyish to the moon.

In the popular belief of the Christian Armenians, traces may be found, even nowadays, of the worship of the sun, called *arev*, and of the moon, called *lusin*, which are personified and considered as brother (the sun) and sister (the moon). The sun figures often in their hymns as the symbol of divine grace. It is a misfortune to die without having turned one's face towards the sun. The Armenians bury their dead only when the sun shines; he who prays outside the church raises his eyes to the sun. The bed of the sick, and the coffin of the dead are carefully turned towards the east. The newly-married couple must turn their looks towards the east before stepping into the nuptial bed. (SPIEGEL, EA II., 69 ff.) But the veneration of the moon is still more popular, as pointed out by ABEGHIAN (page 47) the new moon, which is usually invoked, is considered as salutary in its effects. But the moon is not always favourable: when in its other quarters, it is sometimes favourable and sometimes not so. The good or bad influence of the day depends on it. This idea of recognising a difference in the days, which is called day-charm or moon-charm, and which is not peculiar to the Armenians, was wide-spread in Armenia from ancient times.

Whether, at a remote epoch, the Avesta people gave, like the Babylonians, to the moon, the precedence over the sun (see JASTROW, Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens, 1905, page 72) cannot be proved from the Avesta. In the writings of the younger Avesta, where the religion of Zoroaster does no longer appear in its original state, but has in the course of time lost a part of its old traditions and taken up various new elements (see GELDNER, Ueber die Metrik des jüngeren Avesta, p. iv) the moon indeed is named in two passages before the sun. For example, in Yt. VI., 5, the friendship of Mithra is spoken of, as existing between the moon and the sun

(~~արիւնք արեւելեան ժողովք~~). In the Vishtâsp Yasht (XXIV, 13) we read: Do thou praise him who keeps and maintains the moon and the sun. But in Yt. 13, 16; Ya. 16, 4; Vend. 9, 161, we find the successive order as that of sun, moon and stars, while in Vend. 2, 132; 11, 3; Ya. I., 45; II., 45; VII. 13; Yt. X, 145; XII., 25, 32-34; XIII., 57, stars, moon and sun are mentioned in the inverted order. Therefore I do not think it momentous that in both passages the moon is named first. It is certain that in the latest times of the Sassanides, who called themselves brothers of the moon and wore a crescent on their diadem as we see from their coins, the cult of the moon became more and more important. The Zoroastrian religion had also been propagated in Armenia, not indeed in the time of the Achæmenians, but under the reign of the Parthians. VALARSCHAK I., the first Arsacidian king of Armenia, is said to have created images of the sun and moon and of his ancestors in a great temple in Armenia.¹ It is indeed possible that the cult of the moon-god was transmitted to Armenia from Babylonia. In Ur, the sun-god *Schamasch* was early worshipped together with the moon-god *Sin*, but the Babylonians gave to the moon the precedence over the sun. The last named is expressly called "offspring of the lord of the bright commencement," viz., the moon-god (DELITZSCH, Assy. Handw. 234^a). One of the kings of the *Isin* dynasty calls the sun-god "the offspring of *Nannar* one of the names of the moon-god, and the last king of Babylon, *Nabonnedos*, does the like. When both divinities are named together, the moon-god has the precedence over *Schamasch*, and when the whole Pantheon is enumerated in the inscriptions of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, the same order is observed. A further testimony for the higher rank of *Sin*, the moon-god, in Babylon is the computation of time according to the moon-phases, the moon being on account of the regularity of its changes a better guide for men than the sun. The worship of the moon-god was not confined to Ur; *Harran* was likewise celebrated for moon-worship, but the cult at Ur outshone every other and its glory and importance eclipsed the cult of the moon at all other places." (See JASTROW, I., 66, 67, 72, 73.)

¹ See JUSTI, *Iran. Namenbuch* s. v., p. 346; id. *Grundr. d. ir. Ph.* II, 490, 491, 506; *Geschichte d. alten Persiens* p. 79.

Recently HUESING has expressed the opinion (*Iranischer Mondkult*, Archiv für Religionswissenschaft IV., 349-357) that the moon played a part of considerable importance in the Iranian religion. The orb which, in the stereotype relief representations of the Achæmenian tombs at *Naksh-i-Rustam*, floats in the air above the fire altar, is, according to him, intended for the moon, and the whole scene a representation of the Haoma-sacrifice. In STOLZE's well-known work the author believes to recognize on the first tomb of Persepolis the crescent at the base of the orb. In DIEULAFOY's book (*L'Art Antique de la Perse, Achéménides, Parthes, Sassanides*, Paris 1884-86) the half-circle, as the author says, may be seen quite distinctly, for example, in Plate IV., Tombeau de Darius. DIEULAFOY speaks of it plainly as the "*disque lunaire*" (III. partie, p. 4). Hitherto most scholars took this orb or rather globe for an emblem of the sun. KER-PORTER¹, who visited and designed the tombs, says in his description of this first tomb-relief as follows: "A pedestal of three steps is surmounted by an altar evidently charged with the sacred fire, a large flame of it appearing at the top; high over it, to the right, we see a *globular shape*, doubtless intended for the sun, of which the fire below was the offspring and the emblem." SPIEGEL (*Erân. Altertumsk.* III., 810) says: "A globe which no doubt is intended for an emblem of the sun or of Mithra." Also WEISSBACH (*Grundr. d. ir. Phil.* II, 57) takes the disk for the sun, and the learned Parsee, K. D. KIASH², who like WEISSBACH, visited these tombs on the spot, expresses himself as follows. "Opposite him (*i.e.*, the king), on a platform, is a burning censer, on the top of which is an emblem of the rising sun." On the excellent reproduction which KIASH gives on Plate XLVII., a shade is drawn into the circle above the fire-altar, which has, I believe, no other purpose than to point out that the emblem is a *globe* and not a mere circle. A photographic reproduction of this relief, representing a globe, will show on the right or the left side and beneath, according to the distribution of light, a shade which may be mistaken for a crescent. No doubt a celestial orb is represented here, but the crescent

¹ Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, etc., Vol. I., pp. 516-524. See also KOSSOWICZ, *Inscript. Palæo-Persicæ Achaemenidarum*, Petropoli 1872, Interpret et Commentarii descriptiones Naqah-i-Rustami, p. 86.

² Ancient Persian Sculptures: or the Monuments, Buildings, Bas-Reliefs, Rock Inscriptions, etc., belonging to the Kings of the Achæmenian and Sassanian Dynasties of Persia, by K. D. KIASH, Bombay, 1889, p. 140.

which HUESING professes to see in STOLZE's work is, I think, nothing else but the shade of the globe which the photographic reproduction gives and must give. Perhaps the difference between the representations of STOLZE and DIEULAFOX may be explained by the different distribution of light on the occasion of photographing. As favourable to HUESING's view may be considered the passages in *Herodotus*¹ and *Curtius*,² and also the notice of *Masûdi*, that *Manushchitra* had built the temple of Balch in honour of the moon. Lastly, we must bear in mind the prominent place which the moon worship undoubtedly held in very ancient times in Babylonia, Armenia and in Persia under the Sassanides. If HUESING is right, the moon-cult of the Iranians should have existed already at the time of Darius I. Also CHRISTENSEN³ thinks it not improbable that at any rate in the time of Zoroastrianism, the cult of the moon-god was so to say closely connected with fire-worship.

The veneration of fire, especially of the fire of the hearth, is one of the most ancient religious conceptions of the Indo-Germans. We are not astonished, therefore, to find it also in the Avesta, which preaches everywhere the veneration for the element of fire. In Bombay and elsewhere places are dedicated for this purpose, which are called fire-temples. The name "fire-temple" surprises one, as intimating an unusual form of divine worship, and the Parsis have therefore often been called "*fire-worshippers*." But even in early times Mahomedan writers have endeavoured to defend the Parsis from this charge. The great Persian poet Firdausi says in his *Shâh-nâmeh*:

مگوی که آتش پرستان بودند .: پرستندگان پاک یزدان بودند *

It will suffice to say that the Parsis do not worship fire as a divinity. Fire was considered by Zoroaster as the purest SYMBOL of the Divinity, and is held by the Parsis of the present day to be the emblem of refulgence, glory

* See VII., 37. γεγοντες ἥλιον εἶναι Ἑλλήνων προδεκτορα, σελήνην δὲ σφραῖνον

* IV., 10, 6: Adfirmant solem Græcorum lunam esse Persarum, quoties illa deficiat, ruinam stragemque illis gentibus portendi.

* Orientalistische Literaturzeitung VII., p. 49-52: Die Moschee *Māh* in Buhārā. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 133. HUESING, Der Tempel des Māh von Balh-Baktra.

* KARAKA translates: "Say not that they (the Persians) were worshippers of fire, they were worshippers of one God."

and light, the truest symbol of God, the invisible Creator of the universe. Therefore the observances paid to fire are more prominent than other parts of the Avesta Ritual.¹ Remnants of this veneration have been retained by other Indo-German tribes as also by the Armenians down to the present day. They swear upon the hearth-fire, which is considered as the holy religious emblem of the family (see "Mitteilungen der Wiener Anthropolog Gesellschaft" XXII, 145). In some places it is thought sinful to say, "Extinguish the fire!" One says instead merely, "Bless the fire!" The Armenian popular belief sees in fire also an important means of defence. It drives away the evil spirits and protects men, especially in the night, when the bad spirits are everywhere, save in the fire (*cf.* ABEGHIAN, pp. 66-67).

By daily use and by the vicinity of things thought unclean, as for example, in Iran, by the vicinity of the corpse (*cf.* GEIGER, OK. p. 258. Grundr. d. ir. Ph. II., 299, 681. RAPP, ZDMG. XX., 52 ff, translated by K. R. CAMA, p. 179 ff) the fire becomes polluted. No fire is lighted in a room where a dead man lies. In some places fire is lighted in the open air to warm the water for the bath of a deceased. Such a fire is not lighted from the hearth-fire, which would be polluted, but is kindled anew by flint and steel. After the required portion of water is heated, the fire is unclean and noxious, the half-burnt logs of wood are not left in the court, but are thrown burning into the street. All passers-by avoid these logs in the streets as something dangerous. It is even believed that to tread upon them would cause the death of a member of the family. If by constant use the fire became unclean in the course of time, it was renewed at the consecrated fire-place of the community, a custom to be found with many nations (*cf.* ABEGHIAN, pp. 71-72).

If we now turn away from the powers of light and brightness to those of darkness, with Ahriman at their head, we can trace likewise similar conceptions in the Armenian popular belief. In consequence of the conversion of the Armenians to

¹ The matter is treated *in extenso* by Dosabhoi FRAMJEE, 'The Parsees', etc., pp. 255-266, and Vol. II., pp. 209-225. See also 'The Religion and the Customs of the Persians and other Iranians,' translated from the German of Dr. A. RAPP by K. R. CAMA, Bombay, 1877, pp. 141-144.


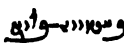
Christianity, the name of Ahriman¹ was indeed obscured by that of *Satan*. But his creatures which are mentioned by Herodotus, Plutarch and Agathias, and in the Acts of the Persian Martyrs, and the destruction of which the Avesta recommends as an atonement for certain sins (*cf.* Vend. XIV., 5-6; XVIII, 66-76), are still an object of fright and fear for the Armenians of the present day (*cf.* ՇԱՄԱ, *l.c.*, p. 160; Grundr. d. ir. Ph. II., 618). These are all the animals that are either dangerous or frightful and loathsome to mankind, for example, the reptiles, the poisonous snakes, scorpions, frogs, ants, gnats and all sorts of vermin which, together with the snakes, or alone by themselves, persecute man during the night. Few men dare to touch a frog, which is considered as an unclean animal. One is frightened to see it at night or in the twilight. It is considered as a demon producing diseases; it produces warts on the hand and makes the teeth fall out. The same action upon the teeth is ascribed in Astapat to the lizards. The ant is not so dangerous as the frog, but it also is sometimes called "devil," and is the cause of a skin-disease called "*mrj̄muk*", little ant. That the Armenians believed also in female demons called "*druj*," is proved by the word "*druc*," which is interpreted in an ancient dictionary as "*dev vnasin*," *i.e.*, demon of mischief. (See ALISCHAN, *Der alte Glaube oder die heidnische Religion Armeniens*, Venedig 1895, p. 218. ABEGHIAN, pp. 30-36). In Armenian, the word occurs in the compound *uxtadruj*, breaking one's word, *tiradruj*, perfidious, as օւլի in օւլի-խախտ = Phl. 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 promise-breaking.² If the ancient name is not any more in use now, the belief in these female evil spirits, corresponding to the Iranian *druj* already mentioned in the

¹ The Avestic 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀 Phl. 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 Ahr (a) man Gl. and Ind. 3, Syr. ܐܠܗܝܡܢ, Neopers. 𐬐𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀, 𐬐𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀 or 𐬐𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀 is in Armenian *Ahrimān* with the collateral forms *Haraman*, *Xaraman*, *Haramani*, *Xaramant*. According to HUEBSCHMANN, *Arm. Gram.*, p. 26. *Haramani* appears to be the more ancient (Arsacidian), *Ahrimān* the more recent (Sassanian) form, as Parth. Arm. *Aramazd* for Ancient Pers. *Auramazdā*, Phl. *Ohrmazd*, Sassan. Arm. *Ormizd* for Middle Pers. *Ormīz*d. See HUEBSCHMANN, *l.c.* p. 13.

² In Armenia we find the verb *dr̄s-em* or *dr̄r-em*, to deceive, to break a contract = Avest. 𐬔𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀 Vd. IV, 11, 12. Yt. X, 18; XIV, 47. Anc. Persian *duruj*, to lie, Phl. 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 to lie, to speak false, to break a promise 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 Gl. and Ind. 260, 262, furthermore the substantive *dr̄sank* or *dr̄rank*, fraud, deceit, and *dr̄sān*, a false man = Phl. 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 false, lying, plur. used as a sing. 𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭥 Ard-i-Vir. V, 6; LG, 3, the false, liars, Anc. Pers. *draujšna*, a liar, Neopers. 𐬔𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀 a liar.

Gāthās, is nevertheless still so strong, that all evil spirits appearing under different names are occasionally feminine. They have intimate intercourse with men in sleep, cheat them, and beget children with them, and these are all again of the female sex.

According to ABEGHIAN (p. 78) the thunderstorm-snakes have a prominent place in Armenian folklore. They are called "*visap*" dragon, an ancient and oft-used word, the popular expression being "*usap*." In the Avesta the word does not occur, but that it is of Iranian origin is proved by the adjective "*visāpa*," i. e., "the juices of which are poisons," which according to BARTHOLOMÆ occurs in the Nīrangastān 48 as an epithet of "*āzi*." From ancient times down to the present day *visap* is, in Armenia, a personification of thunderstorm or whirlwind. As the Greek Typhon or Typhoeus designates the whirlwind, the water-spout, and in general every storm, and is, at the same time, a mythic dragon-like being, that fills the sky with its fiery breath and vapour, so likewise, the Armenian *Visap* is a monster appearing under the form of a water-spout or a whirlwind. According to Armenian popular belief, the thunderstorm is a wind that comes from the earth, rising to the surface from demolished and cavernous places and abysses. Therefore the dragon *Visap* rises or is drawn up to the light; as a thunderstorm-monster he dwells on high mountains, where the whirlwinds intercross, and lastly he is associated with mountain-caves and crevices, as is the thunderstorm-dragon with many other nations. He often changes his shape; he appears in one instant like a snake, in another as a man, once as a mule, then as a camel or as a rider pursuing the flying game. In a thunderstorm the fiery streaks of cloud—which are frequent in Armenia—are called the fiery body of the dragon, while the flash of lightning is the staff or the rod of the angel Gabriel and of other angels, who strike the dragon with it. Thunder is the cry of those who are struck. Finally the dragon is cut into pieces that fall down as snakes, i. e., the stripes of the falling rain are considered as snakes.

In the Avesta *Āzi Dahāka* is also counted among the  and called Vd. VIII, 21  (Geldn.), thus considered as a feminine, while he is generally masculine. This dragon had a most prominent place in Iranian folklore. We find traces of him in Christian Armenia as late as the 5th century A. C. The struggle between *Ātar* and *Azhi* is justly called by EDV. LEHMANN (Lehrbuch d. Religionsgeschichte Vol. II., p. 183-184) the principal myth of Iran, which in the

Avesta (Yt. XIX) is combined with political elements that give to the tale its peculiarly Persian character.

In the Bundahish *Aži Dahāka*'s devilish pedigree is traced back to Ahriman; he has in Pahlavi the traditional epithet *Bēvarasp* (cf. JUSTI, *Ira. Namenb.* s. v. *Baēwarāspa*); in the *Shāh-nāmeh* he appears under the name of *Zohāk* as a human monster invested with sovereignty (see HUEBSCHMANN, *Arm. Gr.* pp. 32, 33; JACKSON, *Grundr.* II, 664). He is also called by Firdausi I., 40, 144 *زدهانش* the dragon-like. He is called by the Armenians *Azdhāk Biurasp*. What place the legend of this *Azdhāk* held in Armenia, can be estimated from the interesting article of V. STACKELBERG (*Bemerkungen zur persischen Sagengeschichte*, *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunde des Morgenlandes* XII, s. 237-238) who gives some details of the Persian legend about *Azdhāk Biurasp* from MOSES of Khorene, and quotes on this occasion a passage from FAUSTUS OF BYZANZ, an Armenian historian who relates that the Armenian queen *Pharendzem* consecrated her son *Pap* (370 A. C.) to the *devs* by whom *Pap* accordingly was possessed; he always communicated with them and they tried their witchcraft upon him. When in the morning the courtiers waited upon the king, they perceived the *devs* clinging to his shoulders in the shape of snakes (cf. Firdausi, p. 32, V. 177), and creeping out of his bosom. But if the patriarch Narses or the holy bishop Chath appeared before *Pap*, the *devs* were not there and became invisible. V. STACKELBERG is inclined not to take this tale of Faustus for a genuine popular legend, but to attribute its origin to the influence of the Christian clergy, king *Pap*, being hated by the clergy because he suppressed the nunneries, prohibited the clergy from taking care of the poor and sequestered ecclesiastical property. Under his reign the discipline of the church was so loosened that, as FAUSTUS relates, many returned to the ancient *deva*-worship. But even if we grant that the clergy influenced the narrative of FAUSTUS, this is precisely a testimony for the popularity of the *Azdhāk*-legend in Armenia at this epoch, and shows how earnestly the clergy had to strive against *deva*-worship which was still practised. Nevertheless I agree with V. STACKELBERG's closing words: "It is characteristic for the force of the Iranian influence upon the intellectual life of ancient Armenia that even Christian ecclesiastics availed themselves, although unconsciously, of Iranian legends for their purposes."

It was not my intention to give in this short treatise a description of the Armenian folklore in all its particulars. But I believe that the little I have given will suffice to show many reminiscences of the old Indo-Iranian time, as well as of the time when the greatest part of the Armenian people adhered to Zoroastrianism, as still extant to-day. Although the zealous ministers of the Christian church endeavoured from the 5th century downwards with all their might to abolish the former religion with its hosts of spirits and its veneration of the celestial bodies, the Armenian people preserved its old songs, and its inherited popular belief. Also after the conversion to Christianity the people believed in the power of the stars that influence the destiny of individual men, unveil their profound secrets and accompany them on their way through life. (See CHALATIANZ, *Armenische Heldensage*, *Zschr. f. vergleich. Volkskunde* XII, pp. 391, 401). This nation likewise bears evidence that religious ideas never perish by the rise of a new religion. "They are," as JUSTI says (*Geschichte des alten Persiens*, p. 73), "clad into another garment, adapted to the system, or banished from the community of true believers, they continue as superstitions which are often more powerful than the acknowledged religion."
